

SAŽECI DOKTORSKIH RADOVA U MUZIKOLOGIJI – SUMMARIES OF DOCTORAL THESES IN MUSICOLOGY

HISTORY OF ART MUSIC AND MUSICOLOGY IN KOSOVO FROM 1945 TO 2020¹

Kristina PERKOLA (Prishtina)

<https://dx.doi.org/10.21857/m8vqrtx8q9>

This doctoral dissertation explores the history of art music and musicology in Kosovo from 1945 to 2020. Although the title suggests a broad scope, the research specifically focuses on outlining the social and historical trajectories of music development in Kosovo during this period. The musical culture of Kosovo represents one of the Southeastern European traditions that began its authentic and independent development only after the Second World War. Compared to other countries in the region, this process occurred relatively late, primarily due to specific social, cultural, and political circumstances. These conditions made the development of art music and musicology in Kosovo after 1945 a highly complex phenomenon. The late 1940s marked a crucial turning point for art music in Kosovo, as this period witnessed the establishment of the first preconditions and institutional frameworks for a professional musical culture. Key factors in this process included the institutionalization of musical life, the foundation of cultural and artistic societies, the opening of music schools, and the formation of ensembles, choirs, orchestras, and music festivals. Equally important were the pioneering composers who, through various genres and smaller art-music forms, served as both the first creators and the leading promoters of musical and cultural aware-

¹ The doctoral dissertation was supervised by Prof. em. dr. sc. Stanislav Tuksar and was defended on 28 August 2024 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, University of Zagreb.

ness. In the absence of a Music Academy in Kosovo until 1975, the first generations of professional composers received their higher music education in various centers of the former Yugoslavia, an experience that significantly influenced their stylistic orientation and compositional techniques.

The dissertation encompasses three important periods: 1945–1989, a period marked by the establishment of cultural and artistic societies, music schools, musical formations, and other institutions, which culminated in the 1970s and 1980s as a fruitful era in the fields of composition and performance; 1990–1999, a dark period characterized by the cessation of Albanian cultural activities and the establishment of a parallel education system; and 2000–2020, a period of renaissance, during which modern musical culture rapidly developed within new socio-political circumstances. This dissertation represents one of the few comprehensive and systematic studies in the field of musicology in Kosovo. The scarcity of such research served as a primary motivation to investigate and document, on the basis of factual evidence, the social changes, cultural developments, and transformations in musical progress that have, since the 1940s, constituted essential components of Kosovo's broader cultural landscape. The study deliberately explores these interrelated aspects, considering them the most significant phenomena for conceptualizing and writing a general history of music in Kosovo, especially in view of the lack of previous extensive research, though acknowledging the existence of several smaller and partial studies. As a comprehensive and complex project, this dissertation rests upon two fundamental premises: first, the attempt to provide an informed insight into musical life and activity across the three aforementioned periods; and second, the recognition that this timeframe represents the most content-rich and formative phase in the national history of music. It should be emphasized that this era was characterized by numerous contradictions, primarily socio-political, but also ideological, ethnic, and cultural. Taking all these defining components into account, the research framework of this dissertation is structured around three key elements: amateurism, professionalism, and multiculturalism.

The dissertation consists of six major chapters that represent closely interconnected areas of research. In order to fully understand the »delayed« development of Kosovan music, the narrative is contextualized within a broader historical perspective. Significant moments of historical and cultural development are presented at the outset, serving as the essential framework of tradition upon which subsequent developments are built. The phenomena and activities discussed hold importance on both the historical-musicological and historical-national levels, as the research does not rely on the criteria of national divisions. No distinction is made between ethnic groups (Albanians, Serbs, and others); instead, the central thesis is grounded in the general social construct, cultural content, challenges, advantages, shortcomings, and overall cultural progress. Most of the data

presented and documented in this study appear here for the first time and, as such, represent a highly significant (though somewhat belated) contribution to the history of art music in Kosovo.

The first chapter focuses on one of the most important developments that contributed to establishing a linear and continuous trajectory of musical progress: the emergence of cultural and artistic societies. The creation of amateur cultural and artistic societies, music associations, and/or folklore ensembles played a crucial role in shaping »new« cultural models and policies that were genuinely emancipatory within the broader cultural landscape of Kosovo at the time. The institutionalization of musical activity through these societies represents the first significant example of organized cultural development, particularly in the field of traditional music. This movement marked the beginning of an era of amateur and pre-professional engagement in music, encompassing folk tradition and heritage, popular music, and various forms of amateur performance. Similar phenomena had been rare in the preceding decades, as cultural, and especially musical activities had not yet achieved the continuous and dynamic development that would follow the Second World War. Based on my research, more than 200 cultural associations were active in Kosovo between the 1920s and the 1990s. However, their activities largely remained rooted in folklore and amateur experience. Nevertheless, folklore and amateurism constituted the key conceptual foundations for all proactive efforts and early attempts at advancement in the field of art music.

The second, third, and fourth chapters are connected by a similar set of activities related to the forms of institutionalization of music. Between the 1940s and the 1960s, the first institutions were established, such as music schools, choirs/orchestras, and festivals. This period is known as the era of »professional musical beginnings«.

The second chapter focuses on an analytical and narrative overview of music schools as the first educational centers that trained future music professionals in Kosovo.

The third chapter represents the core of this dissertation, offering a long-term perspective on the cultural transition that led to the establishment of stable performing ensembles. The founding of musical ensembles, particularly choirs and orchestras, was among the main cultural objectives of the period in Kosovo. Research indicates that until the 1940s, the only existing traditions of instrumental and orchestral performance were those of small folk ensembles and mandolin groups operating within cultural and artistic societies. In fact, no records have been found to suggest the existence or activity of any symphony-type ensemble in Kosovo prior to the Second World War. During the second half of the twentieth century, as Kosovo's art music culture gradually formed its identity within the framework of the European art music tradition, the emergence of orchestral formations, both chamber and symphonic, of semi-professional or professional

character, marked a development of considerable historical importance. By the end of the 1940s, art music in Kosovo was represented by only a few amateur choirs and by occasional performances of string or military orchestras in several towns. Within the following decades, musical activity expanded significantly, encompassing numerous pioneer and youth semi-professional choirs, as well as various chamber, pioneer and city orchestras that collectively marked a new phase in the institutional and artistic development of Kosovo's musical life. Of particular significance is the factual documentation of the systematic activity of the City Symphony Orchestra in Prishtina, the precursor of today's Kosovo Philharmonic. Due to the limited availability of archival data, reconstructing its continuous, albeit occasionally interrupted, activity has been one of the most challenging tasks. The narrative overview of this orchestra, its conductors, members, repertoire, transformations, challenges, and achievements, is presented and published here for the first time. In addition, this chapter sheds new light on three other significant musical formations: the Collegium Cantorum, Vatroslav Lisinski, and Siparantum choirs, each distinguished by its unique history and artistic profile.

The fourth chapter opens with an overview of music festivals as a distinctive form of collective musical life. Festivals are considered highly significant reference points for examining how accessible cultural experiences gradually evolved within both national and international contexts. This chapter also highlights the growth and diversification of festivals, which became major pillars of international artistic activity and cultural exchange. An analysis of previously published musicological sources concerning the so-called »festival tradition in Kosovo« reveals that this topic has been only sporadically addressed, most often in the form of brief newspaper articles in the daily press. In this dissertation, music festivals are presented as the third key link in the process of the institutionalization of music, with two of them examined in greater detail as independent.

The fifth chapter offers a comparative overview of the works, stylistic tendencies, and compositional techniques of Kosovan composers, examined in relation to the compositional forms and styles they adopted and developed. These artistic orientations were often shaped by the environments in which the composers studied, as well as by broader cultural and aesthetic influences. The most prominent among them are Lorenc Antoni (1909–1991), Rexho Mulliqi (1923–1982), Mark Kaçinari (1935–1985), Kristë Lekaj (1935–2021), Fahri Beqiri (1936–2021), Akil Koci (1936–), Zeqirja Ballata (1943–), Rauf Domi (1945–), Rafet Rudi (1949–), Mendi Mengjiqi (1958–), and Baki Jashari (1960–). Through their creative output, each composer's personal expression reflects elements of national identity, functioning as a medium for articulating national consciousness within a multicultural society, first within the context of former Yugoslavia (until the 1990s), and later within the framework of multicultural globalization (2000–2020). The composers' works are

categorized by genre (presented in tables) and arranged chronologically, from the earliest to the most recent compositions.

The 1990s brought the complete suspension of normal social life, the interruption of cultural activity, and the prohibition of the official use of the Albanian language. From 2000 onwards, the socio-political and cultural reality was entirely transformed, marked by significant contrasts, and described as a period of recovery, renaissance, and modernization.

The sixth chapter examines the development of ethnomusicology and musicology in Kosovo as scientific disciplines during the second half of the twentieth century. Ethnomusicology emerged through the efforts of early musicians, such as Lorenc Antoni, to study Albanian folk music and the rituals of traditional life, while musicology arose from the need to articulate musical creation and activity in a scholarly form. Although some scholars have argued that musicology in Kosovo never became as productive as creative and artistic practice, this chapter chronologically addresses the main achievements in both fields, as well as periods of stagnation and future perspectives.

Music in Kosovo, like all artistic endeavors, reflected broader cultural and political developments, encompassing significant transformations within a relatively short period, aimed at Europeanization and Westernization. In its final form, this dissertation offers essential premises for the general history of music in Kosovo. Compared with musical and musicological developments in most European countries and the broader region, it may appear modest in scope. Nevertheless, it represents the first and most comprehensive attempt to document the development and progress of art music in Kosovo, tracing the evolution from organized amateurism, through the gradual institutionalization of musical activity, to professionalism in creative and performing domains, and finally encompassing developments in the scientific and musicological spheres.